

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /130 W

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R 291302Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7728

INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, GW, UR, XH

SUBJECT: FRG PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION'S VISIT TO

USSR -- THE WEHNER AFFAIR

SUMMARY: WHATEVER ELSE HE MAY HAVE ACCOMPLISHED IN MOSCOW, HERBERT WEHNER HAS CERTAINLY SUCCEEDED IN STEALING THE SPOTLIGHT FROM FRAU RENGEL AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FRG BUNDESTAG DELEGATION. WEHNER'S AS YET UNEXPLAINED MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 25 IN THE LENIN HILLS AND HIS SUBSEQUENT STATEMENTS TO REPORTERS CRITICIZING THE FRG'S POSITION ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BERLIN AGREEMENT HAVE ELICITED A FLOOD OF COMMENTARY HERE, MUCH OF IT HIGHLY CRITICAL. WEHNER IS BEING ACCUSED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, OF STABBING HIS OWN PARTY AND GOVERNMENT IN THE BACK AND OF WRECKING THE FRG'S

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CHANCES TO OBTAIN SATISFACTORY SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM

OF CONSULAR REPRESENTATION OF WEST BERLIN IN THE EASTERN
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO WEST GERMAN PRESS ACCOUNTS, WEHNER
SPENT SEVERAL HOURS ON SEPTEMBER 25 MEETING WITH UNNAMED
PERSONS AT AN UNDISCLOSED LOCATION IN THE LENIN HILLS
AREA. THE MEETING APPARENTLY CAME ABOUT AT SOVIET
INITIATIVE. SPECULATION ABOUT THE IDENTITY OF WEHNER'S
INTERLOCUTORS HAS CENTERED ON SOMEONE NOT AT THE TOP
LEVEL BUT IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE WEHNER WITH AN
AUTHORITATIVE STATEMENT OF SOVIET POSITIONS AND TO
ARRANGE A LATER MEETING AT A HIGHER LEVEL, PERHAPS WITH
BREZHNEV THIS WEEKEND. DETTMAR CRAMER, WHO IS USUALLY
WELL-INFORMED, SUGGESTS IN THE SEPTEMBER 27 FRANKFURTER
ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG THAT WEHNER MAY HAVE TALKED
WITH ONE OR BOTH OF BREZHNEV'S FOREIGN POLICY ADVISORS,
BLATOV AND ALEXANDROV.

2. WEHNER'S BEHAVIOR AS A LONER, ALTHOUGH IT AROUSES
SUSPICION AND IS REGARDED BY SOME COMMENTATORS AS AN
AFFRONT TO THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FRG DELEGATION,
WOULD NOT IN ITSELF HAVE BEEN ENOUGH TO CREATE THE
CURRENT UPROAR. THIS HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED BY STATE-
MENTS WEHNER MADE TO REPORTERS ON THE EVENING AFTER HIS
MYSTERIOUS MEETING AND ON OTHER OCCASIONS DURING THE
PRESENT TRIP, MOST RECENTLY IN AN INTERVIEW WITH DPA
IN LENINGRAD. HE IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT THE FRG
HAD "GONE A BIT TOO FAR" IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO "STRETCH"
THE TERMS OF THE BERLIN AGREEMENT; THAT IT WAS, IN
PARTICULAR, A MISTAKE TO HAVE CHOSEN THE NEGOTIATIONS
WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA AS THE OCCASION TO ATTEMPT THIS
SLEIGHT OF HAND; THAT THE SOVIETS CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO
MAKE "FURTHER CONCESSIONS" IN BERLIN MATTERS, DETERMINED
AS THEY ARE TO SEE THE BERLIN AGREEMENT CARRIED OUT "TO
THE LETTER"; THAT GREAT CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN IN DEALING
WITH THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, SINCE DIFFERENT

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COUNTRIES HAD DIFFERENT CONCEPTIONS OF WHAT WAS INVOLVED; AND THAT IN THE CASE OF SACHAROV, HE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO COMPREHEND THAT A MAN SO CRITICAL OF HIS GOVERNMENT WAS PERMITTED TO HOLD PRESS CONFERENCES. WEHNER HAS APPARENTLY STATED QUITE OPENLY THAT HIS VIEWS ON THE BERLIN QUESTION AND, MORE GENERALLY, ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF OSTPOLITIK ARE AT ODDS NOT ONLY WITH THE FDP AND THE LEADERSHIP OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE BUT ALSO WITH THE PREVAILING OPINION IN HIS OWN PARTY.

3. REACTIONS IN THE FRG HAVE NATURALLY BEEN MIXED, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT WEHNER'S STATEMENTS ARE AN EMBARRASSMENT TO EVERYONE, ABOVE ALL HIS OWN PARTY, WHICH IS HARDLY ABLE TO DISAVOW COMPLETELY WHAT ITS OWN PARLIAMENTARY FLOOR LEADER HAS SAID. MOREOVER, IT HAS THE POTENTIAL FOR CREATING SOME FRICTION BETWEEN THE
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COALITION PARTNERS, SPD AND FDP, SINCE IT IS THE FDP-HEADED FOREIGN OFFICE THAT HAS INSISTED MOST STRONGLY ON MAKING THE CONSULAR REPRESENTATION OF WEST BERLIN A STICKING POINT IN RECENT OSTPOLITIK NEGOTIATIONS. THE OPPOSITION, CDU/CSU, ASSEMBLED THIS WEEK IN MUNICH FOR THE CSU'S ANNUAL CONVENTION, FOUND THE NOISES EMANATING FROM MOSCOW A WELCOME STIMULUS TO UNANIMITY. CSU CHAIRMAN STRAUSS ISSUED A PREDICTABLE BLAST. THE CDU'S CHAIRMAN, KOHL, AND ITS FLOOR LEADER, CARSTENS, WERE ABLE TO JOIN IN UNSTINTINGLY. CARSTENS SAID THE OPPOSITION WOULD CALL FOR A BUNDESTAG DEBATE ON THE

AFFAIR AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY. HE CALLED
IT A "UNIQUE EVENT" THAT WEHNER, SPEAKING FROM ABROAD,
SHOULD UNDERMINE HIS GOVERNMENTS EFFORTS TOWARDS FULL
INCLUSION OF BERLIN IN FUTURE TREATIES. HE ACCUSED
WEHNER OF INTERPRETING THE BERLIN AGREEMENT IN A
"NEGATIVE SENSE" FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE FRG'S
INTERESTS AND FAVORABLY FOR THE SOVIET UNION.
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